

Andrew Ralston, M.D.  
2682 Takelma Way  
Ashland, OR 97520

December 20, 2022

The Honorable Mark Mastroianni  
United States District Court.  
District of Massachusetts-Springfield Division

Dear Judge Mastroianni:

I was a practicing physician in California for over 30 years and finally retired last year. I am writing on behalf of Jeremy Hanson whom I have known for over 20 years. His mother is a good friend of the family and I am concerned about Jeremy her son. I got to know Jeremy well when he, his sister and his mother came to live with us during the separation of his parents. At that time I found him to be a polite and quiet boy. I recall that he was concerned about protecting his mother and his sister. I never saw any violent outbursts and remember good moments out in nature with him.

Over the years Jeremy became more withdrawn and insular. But at the same time he was enthusiastic about history and liked to talk with me about what he was reading. He was obviously intelligent and appeared to be doing well in various subjects in school. He read a great deal and it seemed that he might be able to go into higher education with an emphasis on academics.

But while attending the University of California at Long Beach he began to flounder on fears of making mistakes. And, as he withdrew from academic life he found a community on line who actually prayed on fearful young men.

But it has appeared to me that his core values of protecting innocent lives has persisted despite his loony actions. He has no capacity for violence, There are no weapons in his home and he is even fearful to go out into the greater world.

Jeremy is lucky to have a loving mother and sister and it is my hope that with significant treatment he will be able to live life more fully. I envision a time when he will not create panic with impulsive communications. And, I envision a coordinated treatment program that will bring about much greater mental and emotional health. It is my New Year's wish that his life will not be wasted and his mother and sister can live their creative lives unburdened from so much concern and pain.

Sincerely,

Andrew Ralston, M.D.

The Honorable Mark Mastroianni  
United States District Court  
District of Massachusetts – Springfield Division

Dear Judge Mastroianni,

My name is Sandra Litwin and I am the sister of Jeremy Hanson's mother, Lauren Zack, which makes me Jeremy's aunt. I am retired but when I was working I was a semiconductor process engineer. I have known Jeremy his entire life, arriving at the hospital within 30 minutes of his birth. The first 6 years of his life I saw him relatively frequently, but then my family moved to Texas. Since that time, I have seen Jeremy every few years when either I would travel to California or on occasion when Jeremy's family would travel to Texas to visit us.

Outside of when he was very little and fought with my own kids (this is before we moved) I have never seen him use violence of any sort nor has my sister ever spoken of him being physically violent in any way. He really likes animals and is very gentle with them. He totally loves his dog Harley.

Jeremy has had issues with anxiety since he was a teenager. For example, when he was attending college and had to take the bus home for the first time, he literally could not see the bus stop even though it was right across the street from him because he was so anxious. He eventually got a driver's license but gave up driving a year or so later because he got so panicked he didn't know where he was, even when extremely close to home. Jeremy is incapable of traveling on his own without someone explicitly making a reservation, getting him to the airport, and then either traveling with him or making sure that someone is on the other end to meet him, etc.

When his anxiety (caused by OCD and social phobias) is under control by taking the appropriate medications, he can function. Although it took him about 7 years to graduate college with a degree in History because he went at a slower pace than most students, he did eventually graduate. However, due to his issues with making appointments, meeting new people, etc. he never looked for employment because the process was too overwhelming for him.

Jeremy is smart and the things he is interested in, such as history, he will study and converse with you enthusiastically. This past year he became interested in succulents and cacti and as a result has become a collector.

Living at home, Jeremy has not developed the basic life skills one would expect from someone his age. My own personal feelings are that Jeremy could benefit from classes/training in basic life skills because he actually needs to be a little more independent. I also believe that he would benefit from therapy to help him find coping mechanisms to deal with his anxiety/anger issues.

In summary, I think with the proper medication and appropriate therapy/counseling, Jeremy can learn the strategies he needs to cope with his anxieties, etc. in a healthier way.

Sincerely,  
Sandra Litwin

The Honorable Mark Mastroianni  
United States District Court  
District of Massachusetts- Springfield Division

Dear Judge Mastroianni:

I have known Jeremy Hanson for around nine years. I am a clinical psychologist in part time practice but have no professional relationship with Jeremy. I know Jeremy through my friendship with his mother Lauren Zack. I would see Jeremy when I visited his mother. Most of the time when I visited, Jeremy would be in his room alone playing computer games or doing internet research. His comments, when I saw him, suggested wide areas of interests.

Jeremy would come out to join us for dinner, especially when his sister and perhaps one or two of her friends were present. I experienced Jeremy as a quiet, polite, rather shy, soft spoken young man. I am tempted to use the word "boy" rather than "man" because he always struck me as considerably younger than his age in his interests, activities, and social skills. His conversational ability seemed somewhat limited. During one evening his main contribution to the conversation was a monologue of factual information touched off by something in the conversation. I found Jeremy likeable in spite of these limitations.

From my conversations with Ms. Zack I know that Jeremy has almost no ability to function out in the world on his own, in spite of his obviously high intelligence. His extreme anxiety has kept him isolated. I never remember Jeremy coming home from an outing while I was there. I think he would benefit greatly from a partially sheltered setting in which he could learn these functional skills so that he could use his intelligence to benefit himself and society at large. I understand that his ability to function also depends greatly on being on the correct medication regime.

Lauren and I spoke a great deal when Jeremy was just beginning to act out in ways that eventually led him to his current situation. She told me that he had recently returned from a visit with his father which had gone badly, and that these visits were often a precursor to negative behavior. I hope for Jeremy to find a situation in which he could learn more positive outlets for difficult emotions.

Thank you for your attention.

Diana Marder, Ph.D.

Charlene Ralston  
2682 Takelma Way  
Ashland, OR 97520

December 20, 2022

The Honorable Mark Mastroianni  
United States District Court.  
District of Massachusetts-Springfield Division

Dear Judge Mastroianni:

I am writing to you in regards to Jeremy Hanson whom I have known for over 20 years.

Jeremy and his sister came with their mother Lauren to live for a time with my husband and daughter upon the separation of Jeremy's parents. Jeremy was a thoughtful boy who loved our dog and going on long walks with us to a park on the top of our hill. While we walked Jeremy was shy but kind and curious about the world around him. He was a child who responded easily to affection and I certainly felt attached to him. He loved reading and nature. I was sincerely sorry to see Jeremy and his family go.

Over the years he developed a keen interest in history and I know that he excelled in his studies at school. He also loved animals. His own dogs over the years have been sweet, affectionate and gentle under his good care.

It was no surprise that Jeremy was admitted to Long Beach State University. I was so proud of him! But it was at that time that it became apparent that Jeremy was so afraid to make mistakes that it often paralyzed him. He was keenly aware that while driving a car that he might make a mistake and cause an accident. There was such fear in him of hurting others.

I am aware that this fear of making mistakes eventually led him to becoming ever more housebound. And, with his intelligence he took to reading and engaging with the world on-line.

It is with the deepest of sadness that I have come to know that in this limited world Jeremy became vulnerable to the paranoid rhetoric of various extremist groups that had come to the forefront in recent years. These groups promoted paranoid thinking and accusations against individuals and groups of being perverted, e.g. pedophiles, etc.

In my judgment, Jeremy's calling organizations with accusations and threats came from a fear that others were out to cause harm on a large scale. Jeremy was giving

voice to his best understandings of how to prevent harm. These calls were being made from him as a young man predisposed to buy into certain propaganda –a young man who had no weapons and did not even have the capacity to leave his own home.

His mother Lauren Zack is a close friend and I know that she had done all that she could for many years to get help for her son. But, it appears to me that various systems have failed Jeremy despite her efforts.

Jeremy, in my judgment, suffers from serious emotional and psychological problems but has deep desires to protect and is a kindhearted person. My hope is that he will get the care that he needs.

Sincerely,

Charlene Ralston

The Honorable Mark Mastroianni  
United States District Court,  
District of Massachusetts–Springfield Division

Dear Judge Mastroianni,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Jeremy Hanson so that you may better understand him as I know him. My name is Rachel Hanson and I currently work as a themed entertainment actor and freelance artist. As I'm sure you can guess by our last names, Jeremy and I are related and I have known him for the almost 30 years of my life as he is my older brother of four years. Life with my brother has not always been easy, but, for me, that reflects both on his mental wellbeing and also on the fact that he is my older sibling.

As his younger sister I dealt with the usual teasing any older sibling might provide; light name calling, head rubbing, not sharing of toys, and those "that's not fair!" statements whenever I received something that he didn't, whether that was a toy, a snack, or praise from a parent. My brother and I are very different people; I've always been the outgoing social butterfly and Jeremy has always been the awkward and shy one. At home he could go on and on about his latest fixation from Pokemon to Star Wars to Forgotten Realms novels, but take him out of the house and he clammed up to the point of nodding and giving only yes and no answers to questions put directly to him. He managed to maintain a small group of friends in high school, but without the ease of a structured social system it became challenging to keep up with the people he was once close to upon graduation and he has since fallen out of touch with them. Making friends has never been easy for Jeremy due in part to his social anxiety and he has also never been one to stick up for himself because he didn't know how. So that job fell to me.

Despite the never ending teasing and my unending frustration of having to put up with Jeremy, he was still my older brother and if anyone was going to be mean to him they would have to deal with me. It was not a situation that occurred often, but one instance has always held weight in my mind. I can not recall our exact ages but I was young enough to still be in elementary school so it's likely to say I was around 9 years old putting Jeremy at around 13. We were at a Rosh Hashanah service to celebrate the Jewish New Year and had stepped outside to play on the playground at the Synagogue. There were two other boys, roughly around the same age as Jeremy, already playing on the jungle gym who looked at him and refused to allow him to play as well. I remember the dejected look on his face and seeing how he didn't know how to handle the situation, how he couldn't even find the words to defend himself and was so willing to walk away just to remove himself from the awkward tension that had built. It was only once I had inserted myself between those boys and my brother that he found the courage to join me on the playset. And that is the way it has continued to be for his entire life whenever a challenging or new situation has presented itself.

It is only with the unending support of our mother that Jeremy has managed to find any functionality outside our household. Whenever he has become scared or stressed or anxious his first instinct is to freeze and then distance himself from whatever task has become too monumental to overcome. He can not find within himself the right course of action to take to press forward in a stressful situation. He needs the guidance of people that he trusts to show him that things are okay. Without that guidance and support every small inconvenience becomes insurmountably difficult to handle and process. It takes patience and a great deal of time and repetition for Jeremy to learn better coping skills when he becomes stressed and agitated. He has managed to find patterns of behavior that have helped relieve the compulsive thoughts that his combination of OCD and autism have straddled him with. It has only been recently that he has begun writing his thoughts out in a journal instead of posting them online; as well as, finding more soothing hobbies such as tending to his numerous plants and spending more time with the family dog as better coping habits. These steps in the right direction have only come about by the help of therapists and other trained professionals who know how to handle someone with Jeremy's particular neurodivergences.

Jeremy is a guy that loves to read fantasy books, he loves video games, he loves science fiction shows and he loves his dog. When I describe him to people I tell them that he's a huge nerd who's socially awkward, but will talk my ear off about the latest plot twist in the book he's reading. The fault in Jeremy lies in his susceptibility to outside influences without realizing it. Since high school he's delved into the internet and found persuasive people in the forums of Reddit, a website that has notoriously influenced young men to believe things far outside their normal world view. He is not the first, and sadly will not be the last, to go looking for friends and direction in the wrong place. And despite how much the internet has shaped his opinions, I am thankful that it has not created a violence in him. No matter what he says or writes to blow off steam and no matter how offending or cruel the sentiments professed are, Jeremy is not one prone or capable of violent acts. Not only does he lack the drive to enact physical terror but he also lacks the capabilities to do so.

It is my hope that despite this entire ordeal, my brother gets the help that he needs. Help that will enable him to learn to make better choices; help that will get him to express his feelings in a healthier way; help that will encourage him to get a job and be more independent. I thank you for your time in this consideration.

Sincerely,  
Rachel Hanson